

1 MINUTES OF THE

2
3 February 15, 2007 Meeting of the

4
5 Easton Planning & Zoning Commission

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7 Members Present: John Atwood, Chairman, and members Linda Cheezum, Dan Swann,
8 Tom Moore, and Steve Periconi.

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10 Members Absent: None.

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12 Staff Present: Tom Hamilton, Town Planner and Lynn Thomas, Long Range Planner.
13 Zach Smith, Current Planner, and Stacie Rice, Planning Secretary.

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15 Staff Absent: None.

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17 Mr. Atwood called the meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission to order at
18 1:00 p.m. The first order of business was the approval of the minutes of the Commission's
19 meeting of January 18, 2007. Upon motion of Mr. Swann, seconded by Mr. Periconi, the
20 Commission voted 5-0 to approve the January minutes.

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22 The first item was a **Public Hearing** to discuss requested amendments to the
23 Comprehensive Plan changing the designation of **Clifton Industrial Park** from Priority 2 to
24 Priority 1 Growth Area and revising the Future Land Use Map to change the land use
25 designation from industrial to commercial for one of the parcels within the industrial park.
26 Mr. Thomas explained that the first three items on the agenda are requests for properties
27 that are currently not in the Town of Easton. Mr. Al Bond, Economic Development
28 Manager for the Town of Easton explained that the property was developed in 1961.
29 Currently 5 businesses within the industrial park would like to be annexed and if they are not
30 annexed into the Town the business owners will be forced to leave. Linda Cheezum stated
31 that she agrees that it should be a priority 1 area but feels as though planning should have
32 been done by the business owners at the time the Commission was reviewing the Plan and
33 that they should have been aware at that time that they would likely be asking to come into
34 Town during the time-frame of the Plan, and therefore should have requested then to be
35 designated as a Priority 1 area. Upon motion of Mr. Swann, seconded by Mr. Atwood the
36 Commission voted to recommend to the Town Council that Clifton Industrial Park be
37 amended from Priority 2 to Priority 1 and to suggest that either a text or map amendment
38 would be an acceptable option. The motion failed on a 3-2 vote (Mrs. Cheezum, Mr.
39 Moore, and Mr. Periconi opposed). A recommendation against the request to amend the
40 Comprehensive Plan will therefore be forwarded to the Town Council from the
41 Commission.

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43 The next item was a **Public Hearing** to discuss a possible **Comprehensive Plan**
44 **amendment to revise the designation of a 52.87 acre tract adjacent to and**
45 **immediately west of lots fronting on Brooks Drive, known as "The Glebe Farm"**
46 **from a Priority 3 to Priority 1 Growth Area.** Mr. Barry Griffith of Lane Engineering
47 stated that the Comprehensive Plan shows this area as future residential. However, this area
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5 is surrounded by commercial on three sides. Businesses currently need to grow and that is
6 the need for this annexation. There is an immediate need for industrial land in the Town of
7 Easton. Mr. Griffith stated that he felt this would bring more businesses and jobs to the
8 Town. Mr. Warren Clem, Owner of Warren Wood Works explained that he is currently the
9 contract purchaser for the property. His business has been on Brooks Drive for 13 years.
10 Mr. Atwood stated that he feels as though the plan should be amended to become a priority
11 1 annexation area. Eileen Demier on behalf of TPA explained that they are in favor of the
12 subject property coming into Town but as an industrial piece of land rather than residential.
13 Dale Branch then stated that he is the owner of a landscaping company who has moved his
14 business here and has the need to expand. The cost of land is way too expensive and this
15 change would give business owners the opportunity to expand their business. Upon motion
16 of Mr. Swann, seconded by Mr. Atwood the Commission voted 3-2 (Mrs. Cheezum, and Mr.
17 Periconi opposed) to recommend that he Council approve the request to amend the
18 Comprehensive Plan to show the subject property as a Priority 1 Growth Area and to amend
19 the Future Land Use Map to reflect this land as industrial and not residential.
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21 Mr. Moore then stated that he would like to revisit the **Clifton Industrial Park**
22 request as he feels like he may have made a mistake in his vote after hearing the presentation
23 for the Glebe Farm request. Upon motion of Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Swann the
24 Commission voted as to whether or not to re-open the Clifton Industrial Park Annexation
25 request. This motion was defeated by a vote of 3-2.
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27 The next item discussed was a review of a **Petition for Annexation** of property
28 owned by **Doris J. Schwaninger**. Spencer Farms Properties, LLC is the contract purchaser
29 of this 52.35 acre parcel located at Tax Map 42, Parcel 264, just south of property owned by
30 Lakeland's at Easton, LLC at the current southern boundary of the Town. Mr. John Passyn
31 on behalf of the Yorktowne Group explained they want to bring affordable housing to the
32 Town of Easton. He explained their proposal and how he felt it was supported by the
33 Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Passyn further explained that they would
34 enter into an agreement with the town to assure that the proposed project would be
35 constructed with the affordable housing element as presented. Commissioner Swann
36 commented that he agreed that the subdivision is a good plan for the community; however
37 he feels they are too premature. Steven Christen explained that he had a hard time finding
38 an affordable home in the Town, and this project would help to bring affordable housing to
39 the Town, and it would be a help to the County. Rev. Gregory Ball explained that affordable
40 housing is a big issue in the Town. He asked the Commission to think about the
41 community. Erin Branch explained that she has been looking to buy a home and currently
42 rents a home in Federalsburg and wishes she could live in the Easton community where they
43 spend a lot of time. Tom Alspach speaking in behalf of TPA pointed out that Easton's
44 Comprehensive plan clearly recommends this area is a priority 3 and should not be
45 considered for annexation until after 2016. Mr. Alspach also pointed out that the affordable
46 housing proposed by this project is less than the new zoning ordinance amendments will
47 achieve.
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5 Upon motion of Mr. Periconi, seconded by Mr. Moore, the Commission voted unanimously
6 to recommend denial of the proposed annexation to the Town Council on the basis that it is
7 not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, since the subject property is designated on the
8 Growth Areas Map as a Priority 3 Growth Area, which indicates that the do not consider it
9 appropriate for development in the Town for at least 12 years from the adoption of the last
10 Comprehensive Plan (in 2004).
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12 The next item was **Starbucks Coffee** requesting sketch site plan review and
13 recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Michael Hicks and Chris Osborn
14 (architect) representing Starbucks explained the site plan and building architecture. Property
15 is located at the corner of Route 50 and Arcadia Street and consists of .62 unimproved acres.
16 The applicant proposes to construct a 1,869 square foot Starbucks coffee shop with a drive
17 thru window. The building is to be located towards the front of the site with parking in the
18 rear and drive thru circulation looping around the front of the building and through the
19 parking area. Applicant is proposing 27 parking spaces. The commission asked them to
20 revise the architecture removing the murals. Mr. Atwood then opened the meeting to
21 comments from the audience and Dan McDermott, a resident of Arcadia Street, requested a
22 fence screening the view from the rest of the neighborhood and a no right turn sign at the
23 exit onto Arcadia Street. Joe Cooper owner of the adjacent lot indicated his lot was also
24 commercial and he was opposed to the screening on the west side of the proposed parking
25 lot as it would block the view of his lot from Route 50. The Commission agreed to reduce
26 the screening and open the view of the site. The Commission, on a motion of Dan Swann,
27 seconded by Linda Cheezum, voted 4-0 (Periconi Abstained) to approve the site plan and
28 forward a recommendation to the Board of Appeals supporting the special exception and
29 variances. The approval was conditioned on revisions to the building architecture removing
30 the murals, which are to be replaced with a brick pattern similar to that used on the Pier
31 One/Boaters World buildings at East Marketplace; the addition of an evergreen hedge along
32 Route 50; addition of a sign at the parking lot exit to discourage right turns onto Arcadia
33 Street; and a request for Starbucks to work with neighbors and staff to create a mutually
34 acceptable buffer screen.
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36 The next item was from staff to discuss the **2006/07 Annual Report**. Mr. Hamilton
37 stated that Mr. Thomas had indicated that he felt this was now ready to approve subject to
38 the addition of the bio for Commissioner Steve Periconi and required maps. The
39 Commission adopted the 2006/07 Annual Report subject to these items being added prior
40 to forwarding it to the Town Council and the Maryland Department of Planning.
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42 Mr. Hamilton next brought up a memo concerning the proposed **Zoning**
43 **Ordinance Revisions**. The Commission had previously forwarded a favorable
44 recommendation to the Council for several possible revisions as presented by Mr. Thomas.
45 However, prior to scheduling a Hearing at the Town Council level, the Staff uncovered two
46 new issues. One was a request from the Hospital relating to signage in the HC District and
47 the other a correction of a mistake made in the last printing of the Zoning Ordinance. In the
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5 current version we incorrectly inserted an earlier version of language which dealt with
6 parking in the CR District. The Staff was concerned that the problem might be more
7 widespread than that, but upon further investigation has determined that the only omission
8 was that which should have exempted projects in the CR from providing off-street parking.
9 After discussion the Commission determined that no amendment was necessary with regards
10 to HD and agreed that the parking in the CR be corrected to include the omitted language
11 eliminating required off-street parking in the CR District.
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13 The next item was concerning a parking waiver request for **Talbot County**
14 **Department of Social Services**. Mr. Boltanski, the property owner of 301 Bay Street
15 explained he had been approached by the State to see if he could house the State Fire
16 Marshal's office in basement of the building they are leasing for the Department of Social
17 Services. They propose to convert 8 parking spaces in the basement parking lot into 2,400
18 square feet of new office space. The new office space requires 12 additional parking spaces
19 therefore the net loss in parking is 20 spaces. The Commission deferred 20 spaces in its
20 review of the original building and to date there has not been any parking issues. Mr.
21 Hamilton observed the parking over the last several weeks and did not find any problems
22 and counted 20 to 30 vacant spaces daily. The property owner explained the State was a long
23 term tenant and he agreed that any other occupancy of the building would comply with the
24 parking requirements which he put in writing. Upon motion of Mr. Swann, seconded by
25 Mr. Periconi, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the request waiving an additional 20
26 parking spaces.
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28 Mr. Hamilton relayed a request from the Town Council asking the Planning
29 Commission to consider moving its meetings to the evening in order to accommodate
30 working citizens. The Commission voted 4-1 to continue meeting in the day time, but agreed
31 to hold important workshops and public hearings in the evening. This is currently the
32 Commission's practice, but they indicated they will look more closely at which meetings
33 might be of special interest to large numbers of citizens.
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35 Mr. Hamilton asked the Commission to consider waiving provisions of the
36 Subdivision Regulations regarding street names for Cooke's Hope Phase IV. The
37 Regulations require that streets which are in alignment with existing streets must use the
38 same name. Bill Stagg of Lane Engineering requested that Phase IV not use Old Pasture
39 Drive which it aligns with but instead use a new street name. The new phase will be a dead
40 end street and Bill Stagg suggested using a new name would eliminate confusion. The
41 Commission voted to approve the change in street name as requested.
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43 There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. by motion
44 of Mr. Periconi, seconded by Mr. Moore.
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46 Respectfully submitted,
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50 Stacie S. Rice
51 Planning & Zoning Secretary